

Mediterranean Civilizations

Prepare to Read

Objectives

In this section you will

1. Understand how the sea power of the Phoenicians helped spread civilization throughout the Mediterranean area.
2. Learn about the major events in the history of the Israelites.

Taking Notes

As you read, create an outline of the history of the Phoenicians and the Israelites. Copy the outline below, and record your findings in it.

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|---|
| <p>I. The Phoenicians</p> <p>A. Sea-trading power</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. <p>B. Phoenician alphabet</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. <p>II. The Israelites</p> |
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Target Reading Skill

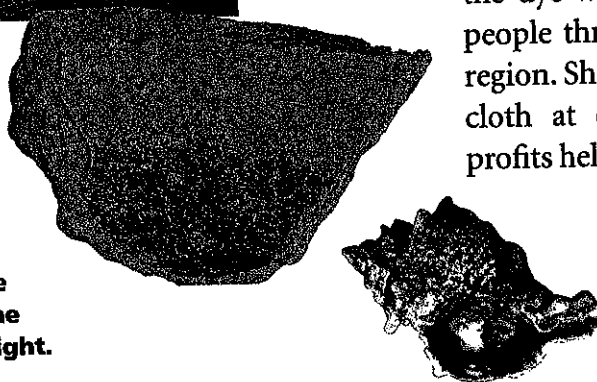
Read Ahead Reading ahead is a strategy that can help you to understand words and ideas in the text. If you do not understand a certain passage, read ahead, because a word or idea may be clarified later on. Use this strategy as you read this section.

Key Terms

- **alphabet** (AL fuh bet) *n.* a set of symbols that represent the sounds of a language
- **monotheism** (MAHN oh thee iz um) *n.* the belief in one god
- **famine** (FAM in) *n.* a time when there is so little food that many people starve
- **exile** (EK syl) *v.* to force someone to live in another country



Above, ancient vats from a site in Tel Dor, Israel, once contained purple dye of the type used by the Phoenicians. The stained pottery piece in the middle probably came from a vessel that held the dye. The purple dye comes from the glands of the murex snail, shown at the right.



While the great empire of Hammurabi was rising and falling, the people of a city on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea were becoming rich by gathering snails.

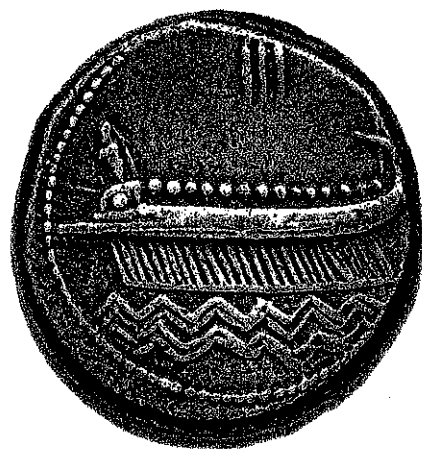
The snails collected near the coastal city of Tyre (tyr) were not ordinary snails. These snails produced a rich purple dye. Cloth made purple with the dye was highly valued by wealthy people throughout the Mediterranean region. Ships from Tyre sold the purple cloth at extremely high prices. The profits helped make Tyre a wealthy city.

Phoenician Sea Power

Tyre was the major city in a region called Phoenicia (fuh NISH uh). Locate Phoenicia and its colonies on the map below. The Phoenicians' outlook was westward, toward the Mediterranean Sea and the cities that were growing around it.

Masters of Trade The Phoenicians had settled in a land that had limited, but very important, resources. Besides the snails used to dye cloth, Phoenicia had a great amount of dense cedar forests. The Phoenicians sold their dyed cloth and the wood from their forests to neighboring peoples.

As trade grew, the Phoenicians looked to the sea to increase their profits. In time, they controlled trade throughout much of the Mediterranean. From about 1100 to 800 B.C., Phoenicia was a great sea power. Phoenician ships sailed all over the Mediterranean Sea and into the stormy Atlantic Ocean. They came back from these trips with stories of horrible monsters that lived in the ocean depths. These stories helped keep other peoples from trying to compete for trade in the Atlantic.

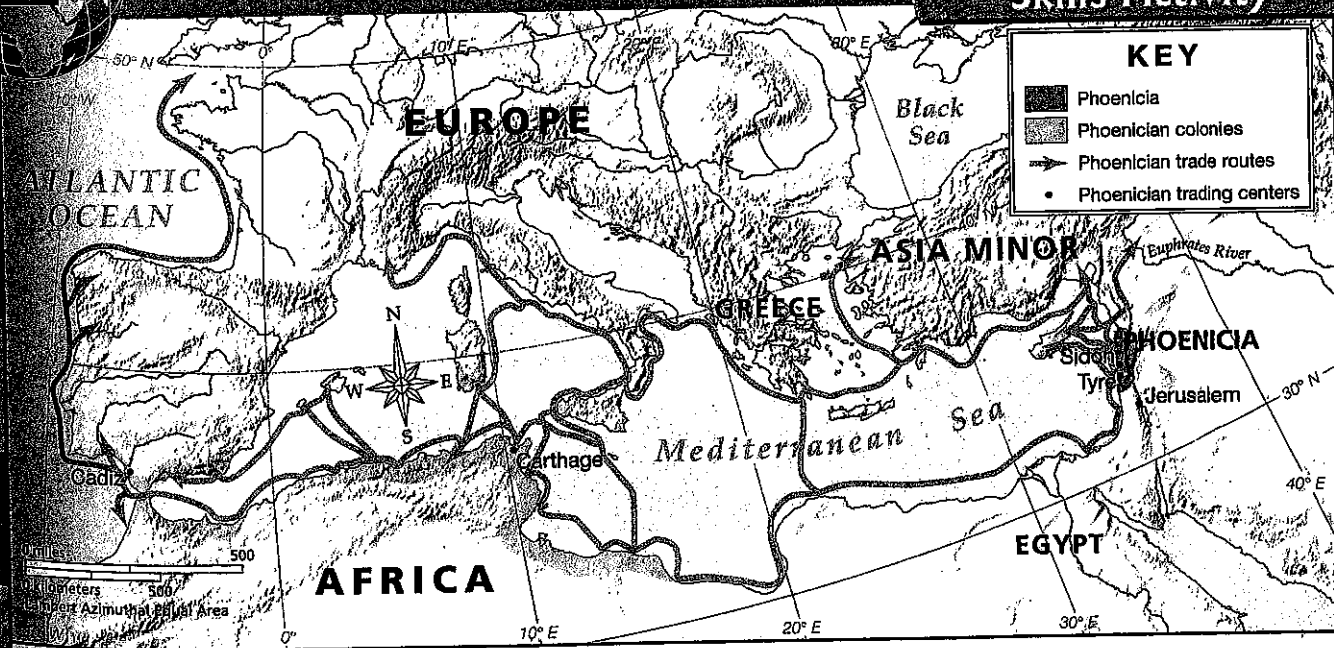


A silver coin from Sidon showing a Phoenician galley, a ship powered by oars



Phoenician Colonies and Trade Routes

MAP MASTER Skills Activity



Location The Phoenicians usually sailed close to the coast.

Identify Name a city in Phoenicia and the trading center that is the farthest west of the city. Use your finger to trace a route between the two points.

Conclude How did the Phoenicians control the sea trade far from Phoenicia?

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Exotic Marketplaces Trade brought valuable goods from lands around the Mediterranean Sea to the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Sidon (SY dun). Bazaars swelled with foods brought from faraway places. These foods included figs, olives, honey, and spices. In the bazaars, merchants sold strange animals, such as giraffes and warthogs from Africa and bears from Europe.

The overflowing markets of Tyre awed visitors. Here is one description of Tyre's bazaars:

“When your wares came from the seas, you satisfied many peoples. With your great wealth and merchandise, you enriched the kings of the earth.”

—the Bible

✓ **Reading Check** What resources did the Phoenicians first use to build their wealth?

The Phoenician Alphabet

A	𐤀	N	𐤍
B	𐤁	O	𐤌
C	𐤂	P	𐤐
D	𐤃	Q	𐤑
E	𐤄	R	𐤒
F	𐤅	S	𐤓
G	𐤆	T	𐤔
H	𐤇	U	𐤕
I	𐤈	V	𐤖
J	𐤉	W	𐤗
K	𐤊	X	𐤘
L	𐤋	Y	𐤙
M	𐤌	Z	𐤚

The Phoenician Alphabet

The Phoenicians relied on writing to help them conduct trade. They developed a writing system that used just 22 symbols. This system was the Phoenician alphabet, a set of symbols that represents the sounds of the language. It forms the basis of the alphabet used in many languages today, including English. In the Phoenician alphabet, however, each letter stood for one consonant sound.

The simple Phoenician alphabet was far easier to learn than cuneiform. Before the alphabet, only highly educated scribes were skilled in writing. Now many more people could write using the new alphabet. The alphabet simplified trade between people who spoke different languages. The Phoenician sea trade, in turn, helped the alphabet to spread.

✓ **Reading Check** How did the Phoenician alphabet differ from cuneiform script?

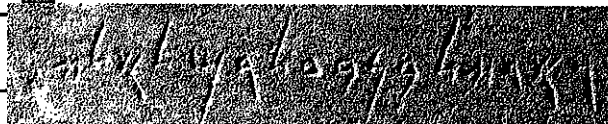


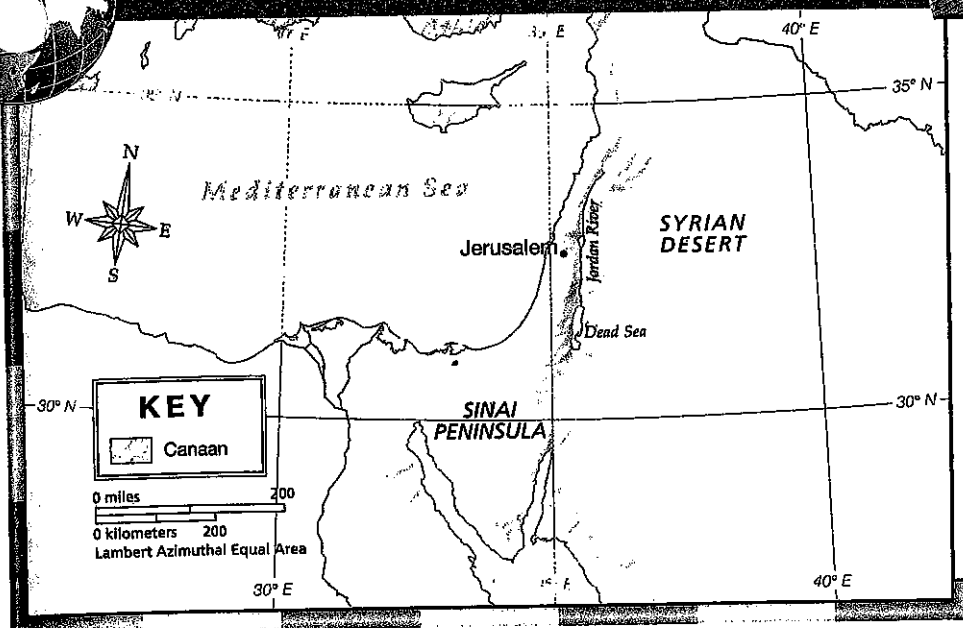
Chart Skills

The chart at the left shows the Phoenician letters that correspond to our alphabet. The symbols for A, E, I, O, and U originally represented consonant sounds. The Greeks later used the symbols to represent vowel sounds. The Phoenician stone inscription above dates to about 391 B.C. **Identify** Which letters in the Phoenician alphabet seem similar to the letters in our alphabet? **Identify Effects** How did the Phoenician alphabet affect other civilizations?



Canaan

MAP MASTER Skills Activity



Movement The Israelites are said to have spent 40 years in the desert of the Sinai Peninsula trying to reach the land of Canaan. **Locate** In what direction did the Israelites travel to return to Canaan from the Sinai Peninsula? **Infer** What physical features of Canaan made it suitable for settlement?

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The Rise of the Israelites

South of Phoenicia, a small band of people settled in the hills around the Jordan River valley. Called Hebrews at first, they later became known as Israelites. Although the Israelites never built a large empire, they had a great influence on our civilization.

Much of what is known about the early history of the Israelites comes from stories told in the Torah (TOH ruh), the Israelites' most sacred text. Historians compare biblical and other religious stories with archaeological evidence to piece together events from the past. In this way they have determined that Abraham, whose story follows, may have lived around 2000 B.C.

Abraham the Leader The Israelites traced their beginnings to Mesopotamia. For hundreds of years, they lived as shepherds and merchants who grazed their flocks outside Sumerian cities.

According to the Torah, a leader named Abraham taught his people to practice monotheism, a belief in one god. *Mono-* is the Greek prefix for "one." The Torah says that God told Abraham to leave Mesopotamia and settle elsewhere:

“Get you out of your country, and from your kindred [relatives], and from your father’s house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation.”

—the Torah



Read Ahead

The Torah says that Abraham was told to leave Mesopotamia and settle elsewhere. Keep reading to see what that means.

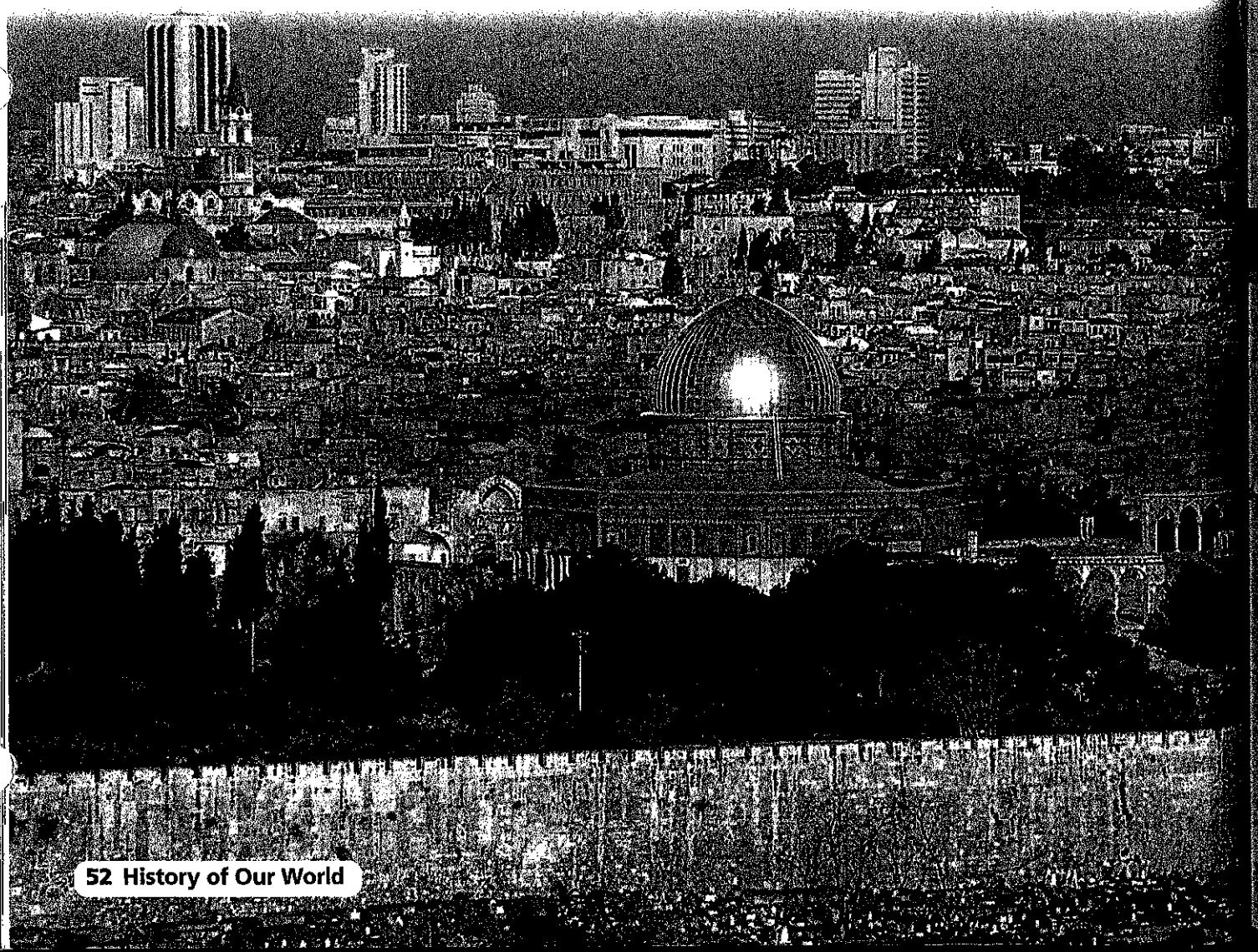
From Canaan to Egypt The Torah goes on to say that Abraham led the Israelites from Mesopotamia to settle in the land of Canaan (KAY nun). Find this region on the map titled Canaan, on the previous page. According to the Torah, a famine then spread across Canaan. A famine is a time when there is so little food that many people starve. The famine caused the Israelites to flee south to Egypt.

In Egypt, the Israelites lived well for a few hundred years. But then, an Egyptian king forced them into labor after he grew suspicious of their power.

In the Desert According to the Torah, an Israelite leader named Moses led his people out of Egypt. The Israelites' departure from Egypt is called the Exodus (EKS uh dus). For the next 40 years, the Israelites wandered through the desert of the Sinai (SY ny) Peninsula. Locate the Sinai on the map titled Canaan. The Torah says that while in the desert, God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, a code of laws. Eventually, the Israelites returned to Canaan. There, over time, the Israelites moved from herding to farming and built their own cities.

Old and New Jerusalem

People have lived in Jerusalem since 1800 B.C. Today, centuries-old buildings stand near modern hospitals, apartments, and hotels. **Analyze Images** Using clues from the photo, describe features that point to Jerusalem's ancient past.



Settlement in Canaan As they moved farther north, the Israelites were able to settle in many parts of Canaan. They united under their first king, Saul, who defended them against their enemies. The next king, David, established his capital in the city of Jerusalem.

A Divided Kingdom After David died, his son, Solomon, inherited the kingdom. After Solomon's death, the country split into two kingdoms. The northern kingdom was called Israel. The southern kingdom took the name Judah. The divided kingdom was ripe for invasion. Its neighbor, Assyria, conquered the Israelites and gained control of Judah.

Sent Into Exile In 722 B.C., the Israelites resisted Assyrian rule. In response, the Assyrians exiled thousands of people to distant parts of their empire. To **exile** means to force people to live in another place or country. The Assyrians controlled Judah until 612 B.C., when Assyria was conquered by the Chaldeans. Judah then fell under control of the Chaldean Babylonians. Later, in 587 B.C., the King of Judah rebelled against the Chaldeans. King Nebuchadnezzar responded by destroying the capital city of Jerusalem. He exiled the people of Judah to Babylonia.

✓ Reading Check Who were the Israelites?



King Solomon

Section 4 Assessment

Key Terms

Review the key terms at the beginning of this section. Use each term in a sentence that explains its meaning.

Target Reading Skill

What word or idea were you able to clarify by reading ahead?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

1. (a) **Identify** Who were the Phoenicians?

(b) **Recall** How did the Phoenicians gain their wealth and power?

2. (a) **Explain** What are some features of the Phoenician alphabet?

(b) **Identify Effects** Describe the importance of the Phoenician alphabet. How did it affect the Mediterranean world and later civilizations?

3. (a) **Identify Sequence** Briefly trace the history of the Israelites from the leadership of Abraham to King Solomon.

(b) **Identify Central Issues** What important events in the history of the Israelites were shaped by movement and by war?

Writing Activity

Reread the description of Tyre. Using what you have read, write a poetic verse about Tyre's markets. Or work with a partner to write song lyrics on the same subject.

Writing Tip Poetic verses and song lyrics don't have to rhyme, but they usually have rhythm. To supply rhythm to your verse or lyrics, it sometimes helps to think of a familiar song as you write. Match words and phrases in your verse to the beats and phrases of the music.